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Bomb Shelter

nytheatre.com review

[Jason S. Grossman](#) · June 3, 2011

Bomb Shelter in the Planet Connections Theatre Festivity is a compelling drama contrasting two tortured souls, a grandfather and his grandson, both at critical points in their lives. The production glides from dialogue, prerecorded text, music, and movement to present a compelling debate. This is not your usual family drama, but a surreal presentation of real people in crisis.

The body of the piece takes place in a claustrophobic basement where the characters cook a batch of crystal meth to sell. The creepy lighting and trippy sounds complement the actors' increasingly inebriated performances to create a drug-hazed atmosphere as they embrace a pointed moral and political debate.

This is a raw production, more dramatic performance piece than play, presenting questions but not necessarily answering them. Conventional dialogue suddenly ceases and prerecorded monologues pulsate amid ambient urban music and sounds; the actors express themselves in movement and dance. The various disciplines overlap and collide beautifully. The story percolates, reaches a boiling point, and ends rather abruptly.

This is compelling work created by a talented production team from top to bottom. Kimberly Pau's script is smart and textured. She knows her characters well, and they speak candidly from generations of life experience. Tensions build and thaw between the characters as they bicker and pontificate; barriers gradually lift and secrets are revealed.

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Theatre for the Adventurous

Director Eric Mercado makes bold choices to magnify the text: set designers casually walk on and off the stage positioning representational set pieces; props are handed to the actors; propaganda posters are paraded about; lights are manually switched on and off. The chaos only adds to the tension. It's all effectively disturbing. DJ Karl Marx's music and sound breathe exceptionally with the elements of Rachel R. Blackwell's stark set design.

The actors are very capable working in this environment. Josh Luria, as the grandson, enters during the curtain speech, and we sense his urgency from the very beginning. Luria presents the troubled good guy persona well, spewing a rambling Edward Grimley-like barrage of anecdotes to his grandfather. Jay Painter has an excellent grasp of the physical and mental world of the elderly grandfather. His performance will stay with you.

This is what festival works should be about: raw, unpolished new productions by creative playwrights and artists exploring controversial themes in unconventional formats. We can only hope to hear more from this crew in the future.

This production might not be for theatregoers preferring a more linear narrative but it's highly recommended for those looking for new theatrical experiences that excite our senses and challenge us intellectually.

Opened: June 2, 2011

Closes: June 12, 2011

Show Info

Synopsis: A scavenger play about one family's honor and the right to kill.

[More Info...](#)

Venue: [Gene Frankel Theatre](#)

Running Time: 1 hour, 20 minutes; no intermission

Ticketing Info

[Online Ticketing](#)

Tickets On Sale Thru: June 12, 2011

Performance Schedule:

Soul

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Jun 2 at 5pm, Jun 3 at 8:30pm, Jun 5 at 9pm, Jun 11 at 1pm, Jun 12 at 9pm

Artists Involved

Cast: Jay Painter, Josh Luria

Author: Kimberly Pau

Director: Eric Mercado

Designed By: Rachel R. Blackwell

Sound & Original Music: DJ Karl Marx

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